

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----094884 292215Z /21
P 290544Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5816

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WELLINGTON 03392

EXDIS FOR DEP. ASST. SEC. RESTON FROM DOLS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: OREP, US. SF
SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL VISITS TO SOUTH AFRICA

REF: STATE 164011

1. IN LATE 1973 OR EARLY 1974, IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THE MULDER FACTION, USING THE SOUTH AFRICAN INFORMATION SERVICE (SAIS), WAS IN THE PROCESS OF CONDUCTING A SERIES OF COVERT ACTIVITIES IN THE U.S. AIMED AT, AMONG OTHER THINGS, BREAKING THE U.S. ARMS EMBARGO AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA.

2. I WAS INSTRUCTED TO FOLLOW THESE ACTIVITIES CLOSELY, KEEPING A RECORD OF SAIS MOVES IN THE U.S. WITH PARTICULAR REGARD TO POSSIBLE VIOLATIONS OF THE FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTRATION ACT, THE FOREIGN GIFT ACT, THE RESTRICTIONS ON ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS BY MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH IN ART. I, SEC. 9, U.S. CONST., THE EXPORT ADMINISTRATION ACT, MUNITIONS CONTROL REGULATIONS, AND THE MILITARY AND SPORTS CONTACTS POLICIES.

3. UNAWARE OF RESTRICTIONS ON ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS FROM FOREIGN GOVTS., THE SAIS IN 1973 SPONSORED A VISIT BY FIVE CONGRESSIONAL STAFFERS TO SA. THEIR NAMES APPEAR
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IN THE 1973 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SA DEPT. OF INFORMATION. FOLLOWING THE CONTROVERSIAL VISIT OF ADM. BIERMANN IN MAY 1974 AND AN OPINION OF THE HOUSE COM. ON STANDARDS RELATING TO ACCEPTANCE OF VISIT INVITATIONS, THE SOUTH AFRICANS BECAME AWARE OF USG SENSITIVITY TO THEIR USE OF VARIOUS FRONTS FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES AND TO PROMOTE VISITS IN BOTH DIRECTIONS. IN ABOUT SEPTEMBER 1974,

ESCHEL RHOODIE, THEN HEAD OF THE SA DEPT. OF INFORMATION, VISITED WASHINGTON AND MET WITH SAIS ATTORNEY DONALD DE KIEFFER, REPRESENTATIVES OF A CAPITOL HILL LOBBY GROUP FAVORING SA, AND SOME CONGRESSIONAL STAFFERS TO DISCUSS, AMONG OTHER THINGS, WAYS OF AVOIDING THE CONSTITUTIONAL AND OTHER OBSTACLES TO BRINGING CONGRESSIONAL VISITORS TO SA. THEREAFTER, A SERIES OF FRONTS WERE OBSERVED BEING USED TO SPONSOR THE VISITS, AMONG THEM SA BUSINESSMAN WERNER ACKERMAN AND THE SA AGRICULTURAL UNION.

4. IN EARLY 1975, WHEN CONGRESSMAN FRASER ANNOUNCED IN A COMMITTEE HEARING THAT REPS. DENT, ICHORD AND RUNNELS WERE GOING TO VISIT SA, AND IT WAS LEARNED THAT THE VISIT WAS TO BE MADE AT THE INVITATION OF WERNER ACKERMAN, AF/S OFFERED THE USUAL PREDEPARTURE BRIEFING TO THE CONGRESSMEN. DIRECTOR PAUL O'NEILL, ECONOMIC OFFICER DAVID CHRISTIANSON, AND I CALLED JOINTLY ON DENT, RUNNELS AND ICHORD. IN THE MEETING, I STATED THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAD INFORMATION WHICH INDICATED THAT THE OSTENSIBLE HOST FOR THE VISIT, WERNER ACKERMAN, WAS NOT THE TRUE HOST, THAT IN FACT THE VISIT WAS BEING PAID FOR BY THE SAG. DENT VEHEMENTLY DENIED THE SAG WAS PAYING FOR THE TRIP AND THEN LAUNCHED INTO A TIRADE AGAINST THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY FAVORING REPEAL OF THE BYRD AMENDMENT. FOLLOWING THIS, I

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REPEATED THAT WE HAD INFORMATION THAT THE TRIP WAS BEING PAID FOR BY THE SAG, AND DENT AGAIN DENIED IT.

5. SEVERAL WEEKS LATER, SA AMBASSADOR BOTHA MET WITH THEN-ASST. SEC. EASUM AND ME TO COMPLAIN THAT THE DEPARTMENT, IN HIS WORDS, "HAD BEEN TELLING CONGRESSMEN NOT TO GO TO SA." I EXPLAINED TO AMB. BOTHA THAT THE DEPT. DOES NOT TELL CONGRESSMEN WHERE THEY MAY TRAVEL, BUT THAT WE HAD STANDING INSTRUCTIONS TO OFFER A BRIEFING TO ALL CONGRESSMEN PROPOSING TO TRAVEL ABROAD AND BECAUSE WE HAD INFORMATION INDICATING A POSSIBLE VIOLATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL RESTRICTIONS, WE ALSO HAD AN OBLIGATION TO WARN THEM ON THAT POINT. AMB. EASUM SUPPORTED MY EXPLANATION AND THE SUBJECT WAS CLOSED.

6. TWO OTHER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WERE INVOLVED IN SIMILAR SITUATIONS AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME. THEY WERE REPS. BOB WILSON OF CALIFORNIA AND SEN. CURTIS. IN THE CASE OF WILSON, ESSENTIALLY THE SAME EVENTS TRANSPIRED AS IN THE EARLIER MEETING WITH DENT, RUNNELS AND ICHORD, I.E., I INFORMED HIM AND HE DENIED THAT ANYONE BUT ACKERMAN WAS PAYING FOR THE VISIT. IN THE

CASE OF CURTIS, THE OSTENSIBLE HOST WAS THE SA AGRI-CULTURAL UNION. AT THAT POINT IN TIME, EVIDENCE WAS LESS CLEAR THAT THE SA AGRICULTURAL UNION WAS BEING USED AS A FRONT IN THE SAME FASHION AS ACKERMAN. WHEN A PRE-DEPARTURE BRIEFING WAS OFFERED TO CURTIS, HE INVITED ME TO HIS OFFICE. I EXPLAINED THAT A NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF CONGRESS HAD BEEN HAVING DIFFICULTY IN SITUATIONS SUCH AS THIS AND OUTLINED THE GENERAL

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----094804 292217Z /21
P 290544Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5817

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 WELLINGTON 03392

EXDIS FOR DEPT. ASST. SEC. RESTON FROM DOLS

MODUS OPERANDI OF THE SAIS, INCLUDING THE USE OF FRONTS TO SERVE AS OSTENSIBLE HOSTS FOR THE VISITS. HE RESPONDED BY CALLING IN HIS SECRETARY AND DICTATING A LETTER TO THE DEPARTMENT IN WHICH HE ASKED THE DEPARTMENT TO PRONOUNCE ON THE LEGALITY OF HIS PROPOSED VISIT. I TOLD HIM I WOULD BE HAPPY TO TAKE THE LETTER TO THE DEPARTMENT, BUT THAT THE DEPARTMENT LACKED AUTHORITY TO MAKE ANY PRONOUNCEMENT ON THE QUESTION. I THEN TOOK THE LETTER TO PROTOCOL AND THAT OFFICE RESPONDED ESSENTIALLY AS I PREDICTED THEY WOULD.

7. AS MUCH OF THIS OCCURRED FOUR TO FIVE YEARS AGO, I DO NOT RECALL ALL OF THE EVIDENCE WHICH WAS ACCUMULATED DURING THAT PERIOD ON THESE VISITS AS WELL AS ON THE MANY RELATED SAIS OPERATIONS SUCH AS THE CLUB OF TEN, THE GOFF-PANAX INVOLVEMENT, ETC. THERE WERE, HOWEVER, A HOST OF INPUTS WHICH ESTABLISHED CONCLUSIVELY THE FACT THAT ACKERMAN AND OTHERS WERE BEING USED AS FRONTS FOR THESE COVERT ACTIVITIES, AND THE RECENT REVELATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THOSE CONCLUSIONS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978WELLIN03392
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780269-0942
Format: TEL
From: WELLINGTON
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978065/aaaaaelt.tel
Line Count: 169
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 2ec35087-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 STATE 164011
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2319343
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONGRESSIONAL VISITS TO SOUTH AFRICA
TAGS: OREP, US, SF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2ec35087-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014